

TRAFFIC AND SAFETY INFORMATIONAL SERIES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION #7

What Factors Are Considered When Locating, Controlling, and/or Marking Pedestrian Crossings?

At intersections, motorists and pedestrians sometimes compete for the same space. Because intersections are primarily designed to serve motor vehicles, they can be unsafe for pedestrians. The proper location, marking, and signing of pedestrian crossings is therefore very important for pedestrian safety.

Where is a good place for a crossing?

Pedestrian crossing locations are determined by the amount of existing or expected pedestrian traffic. The most common location for a marked or unmarked pedestrian crossing is at an intersection with a stop sign or traffic signal. However, if a significant number of pedestrians cross at midblock, marked crossings can also be designated at these locations.

When are crosswalk stripes painted?

Typically, crosswalk stripes consisting of solid white lines on both sides of the pedestrian path are painted at crossings with a high volume of vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Painted crosswalk stripes are especially important at locations where pedestrians may be uncertain about where they should cross. These markings can also serve as a signal (possibly along with some signing) to motorists that a crossing is present. Where a crossing requires additional visibility or attention, hatched zebra markings may be added that consist of white diagonal lines painted at a 45-degree angle to the line of the crosswalk.

When are crossing signs needed?

Advance crossing signs, which picture a person walking, are used to warn drivers of unexpected crossing locations. A school advance crossing sign is used at locations where school children cross.



Advance crossing sign



School advance crossing sign

When are crossings controlled by traffic signals?

Some locations may require a dedicated signal to help direct the flow of pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic and improve safety. For example, a signal such as a high-intensity activated crosswalk (HAWK) beacon might be added at a midblock pedestrian crossing. An engineering study should be used to determine whether a signal is warranted at a particular location.

For more information

For more information, please contact _____.